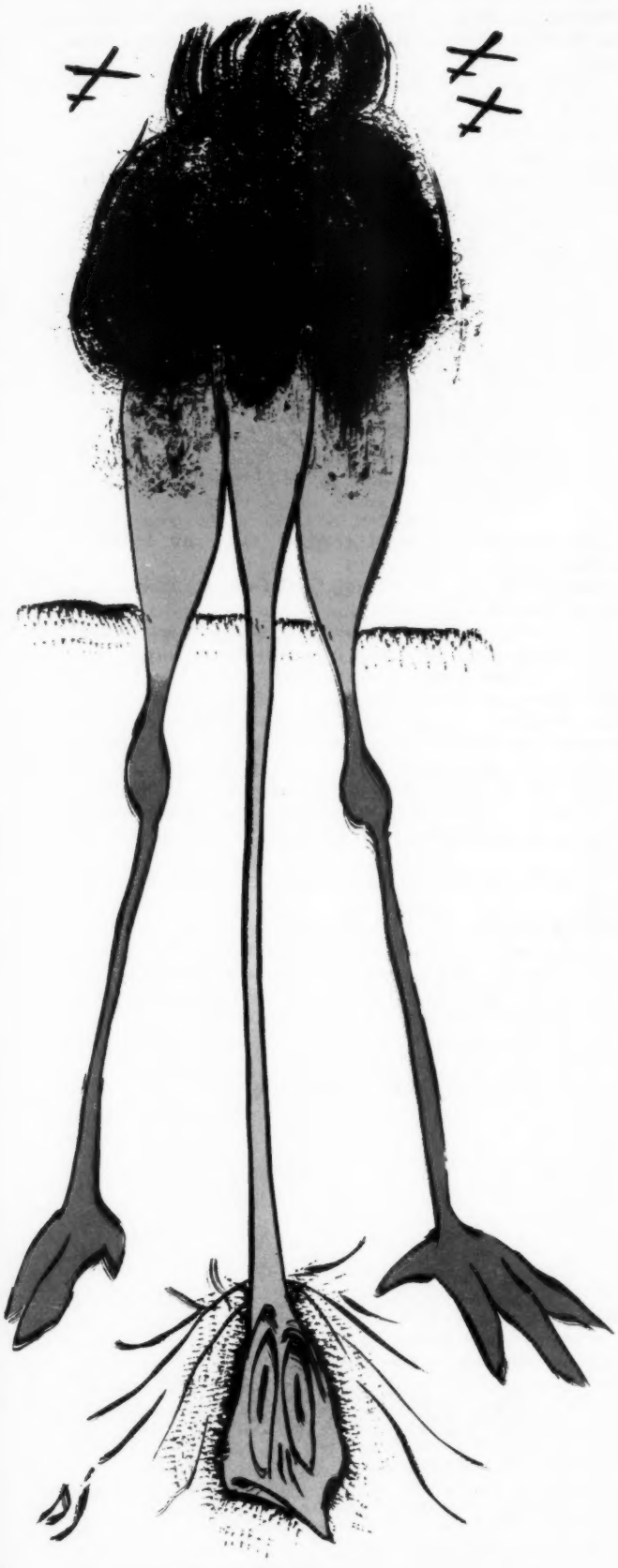


Illustrations by Stuart Judd, Jr.

Future Voters
DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Service of the Center for Information on America, Washington, Connecticut.

January, 1954 Vol. 3, No. 5

HOW ABOUT CIVIL DEFENSE?

The ostrich is supposed to dodge threats of danger by sticking its head in the sand.

Actually, it has far more sense than that.

But have we?

Federal Civil Defense Administrator Val Peterson, on the basis of information available, says "... the Russians have the necessary airplanes and enough atomic bombs to make a very effective attack upon the United States right now."

What's likely, if an enemy attacks—he adds—will be many Pearl Harbors in tremendous force, seeking within twenty-four hours to knock out all great U. S. industrial and population centers.

"At the present time," Defense Administrator Peterson goes on, "the Air Force will tell you that it simply cannot take effective measures to stop a mass Soviet attack." Later, perhaps, when there's been time for improvement in our air defenses, but not now.

"The Air Force"—he continues—"says it cannot guarantee us any specific warning time. It could be up to fifteen minutes and it may be no warning at all."

No wonder Senator Alexander Wiley, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, declares that our wide open "... vulnerability to enemy atomic attack represents the single gravest threat to America's security in its entire history."

Maybe the attack will never come—let's hope and pray it doesn't.

But such things **have** happened to us before—at Pearl Harbor.

They **could** happen again.

Can we afford to follow the supposed example of the ostrich—just because the subject strikes us as unpleasant?

Can we afford to do little or nothing, when some common sense precautions might make all the difference in the world?

What would each of us do right now if we heard over the radio that the radar screen and ground observer corps had spotted attacking planes?

Has our town, our school, our club, or place where we're meeting got an organized civil defense program, with people trained and responsible for carrying it out?

What would be the probable result of an "A" bomb hit in the general area in which we are living?

What are we and our community prepared to do should an "A" bomb burst over a community near our own?

To check on ourselves, and to decide how informed and ready we are, let's examine the following pages.

What happens to bombed cities?

Before the atomic age, during World War II, German Propaganda Minister Goebbels's private diary for July, 1943, gives an account for Hamburg. Part of Goebbels's job was to conceal from the German people the real nature of disaster—but he could not conceal the facts from himself.

"During the night we had the heaviest raid yet made. ... The English appeared over the city with eight hundred to a thousand bombers. Our anti-aircraft succeeded in shooting down only a very few . . .

Kaufmann* gave me a first report on the effect . . . He spoke of a catastrophe the extent of which simply staggers the imagination. A city of a million inhabitants has been destroyed in a manner unparalleled in history. We are faced with problems that are almost impossible of solution, . . . problems . . . of which we had no conception even a few weeks ago."

In the midst of the atomic age,† with the United States and Russia stockpiling atomic and hydrogen bombs, and with other nations—Britain, France, Brazil, India, Norway, Sweden—working on them too, President Eisenhower, speaking before the General Assembly of the United Nations last month, said this:

"Atomic bombs today are more than twenty-five times as powerful as the weapons with which the atomic age dawned, while hydrogen weapons are in the ranges of millions of tons of TNT equivalent. ...

Even a vast superiority in numbers of weapons, and a consequent capability of devastating retaliation, is no preventive, of itself, against the fearful material damage and toll of human lives that would be inflicted by surprise aggression."

Eleven years ago, at Hamburg, the fire storm which developed right after the pre-atomic age bombing accounted for many of the 60,000 deaths. When ordinary fires start in a disaster-stricken city, there's apt to be time for survivors to make their way out. In a fire storm, separate blazes, if not brought under control, gather rapidly into one enveloping tornado-like mass. The air is sucked away. The carbon monoxide gas that's generated accounts for many victims even before heat and flames kill them.

Because the heat they generate is that of the sun, atom blasts, in addition to their explosive and radioactive power, are potent generators of fire storms.‡

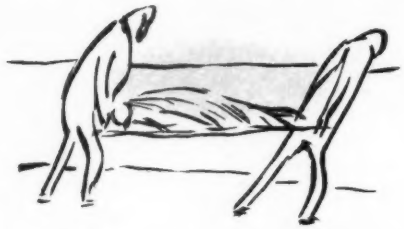
Nor are nuclear fission and thermonuclear weapons the only ones to reckon with. There's also biological and chemical warfare.

Nuclear weapons wipe out cities.

Germs and gas warfare can be used effectively in the country as well. In rural areas, they offer a means to destroy a nation's food supply—its animals and crops.

Nerve gas§ (the Russians have that, along with us, and it is cheap and easy to make) gives no warning, has no telltale smell, yet destroys people with paralyzing suddenness—much as the new insecticides kill flies. Unlike nuclear weapons, it would leave the nation's factories intact, ready to serve the invaders.

"Nerve gas," says Defense Administrator Val Peterson, "used by an enemy with maximum efficiency could be deadlier than an atomic bomb."



The spectacle of total warfare does not make a pretty picture.

But setting up a practical Civil Defense Program is by no means impossible.

It is better to plan for possible emergencies than it is to shrug one's shoulders over possible disaster. It is better to think about aiding others rather than think just about saving ourselves. It is better to work for that democratic team play which has distinguished the greatest moments in our nation's history. It is better to believe that man's finest accomplishments can be surpassed in a peaceful, attainable future. In the face of danger, it is far better to plan and work constructively than to be pessimistic, apathetic, and do little or nothing at all.

Let's discuss the situation under the following headings.

SHOULD PEOPLE BE TOLD THE FACTS?

In his speech before the UN, President Eisenhower said: "Clearly, if the peoples of the world are to conduct an intelligent search for peace, they must be armed with the significant facts of today's existence."

Do we, or do we not, believe that President Eisenhower's call for release of "the significant facts" is a move in the right direction? What are our reasons?

How about the security problem, keeping information out of the hands of our enemies?

What bearing does what we've been talking about under this heading have on people's attitude towards carrying out a program of civil defense?

Should or should not our official policy include greater cooperation with friendly nations like Britain in the problems of atomic defense and in the sharing and exchange of atomic information? Why?

DEFENSE

It seems clear that a program for national defense must include both military protection and civil defense. Military protection means armed forces. It must include warning systems against attack—radar screens where they are most needed, and other warning devices. It

**Nazi Chief for the Hamburg Area.*

†For an early atomic age report of what happens, based on eye witness accounts, read ***Hiroshima*** *by John Hershey.*

‡Congested areas like New York's Manhattan are especially vulnerable not only because falling buildings would kill or trap many people but because a fire storm could destroy the rest in the shelters or among the ruins.

§Masks have been designed which offer protection against nerve gas—but not enough are in production even to equip our armed forces.

must include strategically located bases, military stockpiles, and competent staff work. But, as Civil Defense Administrator Peterson states, "Total defense . . . demands civil defense in proper balance with the military."

In case of attack civil defense would play a very important part in preserving the heart and soul of the nation: its citizens and what they believe in and live by—our democratic institutions and heritage. Civil defense is people. Adequate civil defense means that every man, woman and child will have at least some knowledge of what he or she should do before, during, and after an attack. Civil defense means we are prepared to keep ourselves and the nation going in case of attack, keep producing, be ready to strike back.

OUR PRESENT CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM

The job of such a program is to cut down the damage that would result from an enemy attack. This means reducing casualties, taking care of those hurt, restoring buildings and services (including government and production), and, perhaps most important of all, keeping up public morale. There are many requirements to carrying out the job. Planning is one of them, which includes such things as setting up a warning system, maintaining communications, providing shelters, and organizing the work of fire fighting and rescue. Teaching everyone what to do, and building up a trained force of civil defense workers—volunteers and professionals—is another requirement.

According to the **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists**, which since the start of the atomic age has earnestly advocated our paying more attention to civil defense, "The American people . . . are without any real plan to protect themselves." In a recent coast to coast survey by the American Institute of Public Opinion, people in our largest cities were asked if, **in case of war**, they thought atomic bombing of their own city would be likely. Only half believed it might happen to them. Yet the greatest awareness of danger was found in the cities, since cities would be the number one target. The most adequate civil defense work thus far done is to be found in certain of our cities.*

To the question, "Are you, yourself, doing any work in the civil defense program, such as air raid warning, first aid, and the like?" only 4% of the people asked all over the nation answered "yes."

The present Federal Civil Defense Act was adopted three years ago. The general plan is for the Federal Civil Defense Administration to pass along its information and suggestions to the state governments, they in turn to pass them along to the cities within their borders.

Is or is this not the best arrangement? Why?

In 1952, Congress voted over forty-five **billion dollars** for military defense; less than forty-five **million** for civil defense. In 1953, President Eisenhower's budget allotted one hundred and twenty-five million to civil defense, which was twenty-five million less than what was budgeted by the previous administration. In its closing meetings last summer, Congress cut this amount to forty-six million, five hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. For 1954, Civil Defense Administrator Peterson intends to seek six hundred and fifty million from the present session of Congress. In testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee, he declared, "We spend billions on how to defeat the enemy, but only a handful of dollars on how to protect the American people from possible enemy atomic bombs."

Do we or do we not agree with Administrator Peterson's implication that we are not spending enough on civil defense? What do we feel should be the proper proportions? What should be done about it?

AMERICA'S GLASS JAW

A boxer with a brittle or sensitive jaw is highly vulnerable, no matter how skillful a fighter he is. Our great industrial cities are our glass jaw, as is Washington, D. C.—often referred to as our number one target.

By bombing Washington, wiping out our machinery of government and killing many of those who run it, an enemy could strike us a paralyzing blow. By dispersal—not having the Federal government all concentrated at one place—the danger can be considerably lessened. A few such precautions have been taken—but only a very few. Such dispersal, it is argued, would be costly. Congressmen and other officials also don't like to open themselves to the charge they're looking after their own skins.

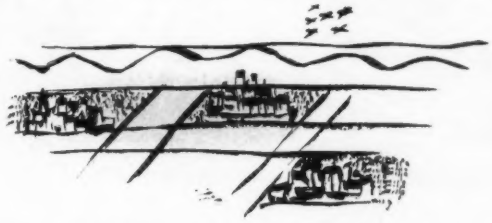
Should or should not a program of dispersal of the Federal government's personnel and agencies be undertaken?

Much the same problem presents itself with regard to American industry.

Back in World War II, when German bombers were striving to destroy Russia's ability to fight back, the Soviet Union learned the lesson of avoiding industrial concentration. An intensive Russian dispersal program has been going on ever since. New cities, especially planned, have been rising in the vastness of Siberia behind the Ural mountains.

Dispersal is the safest thing if we want to make a 'super Pearl Harbor' impossible.

Dispersal which could force industry to move from one state to another less heavily industralized is apt to be resisted by both local business and political leaders. But this is not the only type of dispersal. Nor is the big city necessarily doomed by nuclear weapons.



Perhaps a more dispersed type of big city growth (just as the planned and spacious shopping center is taking the place of the old jumble of stores) would save the situation.

Expense must also be reckoned with—though since industry normally spends between twelve and fifteen billion dollars each year for new plants or additions to old ones, these improvements could be so located as to be part of a dispersal pattern.

**On Dec. 14 and 15, the mayors and city managers of 175 U.S. cities came to Washington, D.C., on White House invitation, to discuss and be briefed on the world situation, civilian defense, and disaster relief. This is the first time in U. S. history that such a meeting between federal and municipal officials has been held.*

It is arguable, too, that dispersal, relieving congestion and making for more efficient and productive plants, will eventually pay its own way.

What type of dispersal do we favor, and why?

How much dispersal is needed?

Should the primary responsibility for dispersal rest with the federal government or with local government and local private enterprise?

What things should be borne in mind in planning dispersal?

Aside from the aim of safety, are there other benefits we can think of which might justify dispersal?

NOT BEING WHERE THE BOMB FALLS

The safety of our urban population is closely connected with protection of our industry. As long as great cities and the threat of war exist, the best protection is to get as many people as possible away from where the bombs are likely to fall.

This means programs for evacuation.

If we live in a target area,© does any such program exist? If it does, what are the plans for carrying it out?

ABOLITION OF WAR THE BEST DEFENSE

Obviously! But how can this be done?

Let's discuss some possibilities.

In his address before the UN, President Eisenhower proposed a plan through which the scientists of all nations could have available the means to develop atomic energy for universal peaceful use such as providing abundant electrical energy for the power-starved areas of the world. Other such uses would include serving the needs of agriculture, medicine, and other activities which contribute to the well-being of mankind. To this purpose, he suggested that

"...the governments principally involved, to the extent permitted by elementary prudence, . . . begin now and continue to make joint contributions from their stockpiles of normal uranium and fissionable materials to an International Atomic Energy Agency. We would expect that such an agency would be set up under the aegis of the United Nations."

The President added:

"The proposal has the great virtue that it can be undertaken without the irritations and mutual suspicions incident to any attempt to set up a completely acceptable system of world-wide inspection and control."

And he declared himself ready to submit to Congress any plan for our cooperation which would:

(1) "encourage world-wide investigation into the most effective peacetime uses of fissionable material.

(2) begin to diminish the potential destructive power of the world's atomic stockpiles.

(3) allow all peoples of all nations to see that ... the great powers of the earth, both ... East and ... West, are interested in human aspirations first, rather than in building up the armaments of war.

(4) open up a new channel for peaceful discussion, and initiate ... a new approach to the many difficult problems that must be solved ... if the world is to shake off the inertia imposed by fear, and is to make positive progress toward peace."

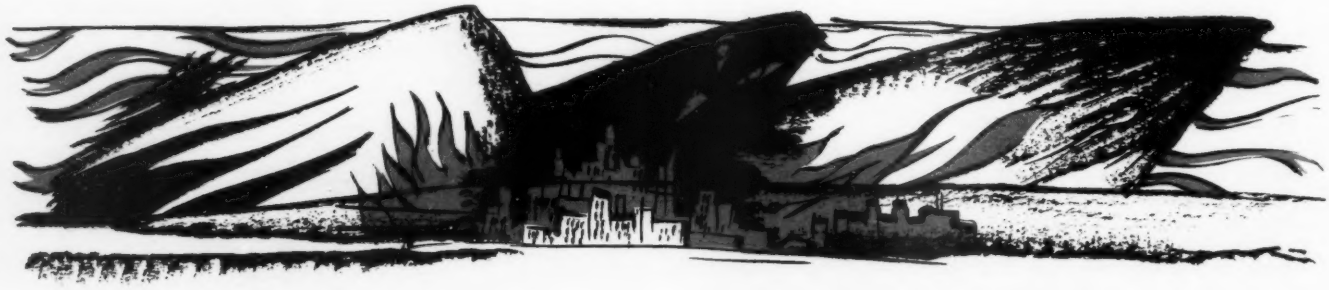
What are our opinions and thoughts about President Eisenhower's proposal?

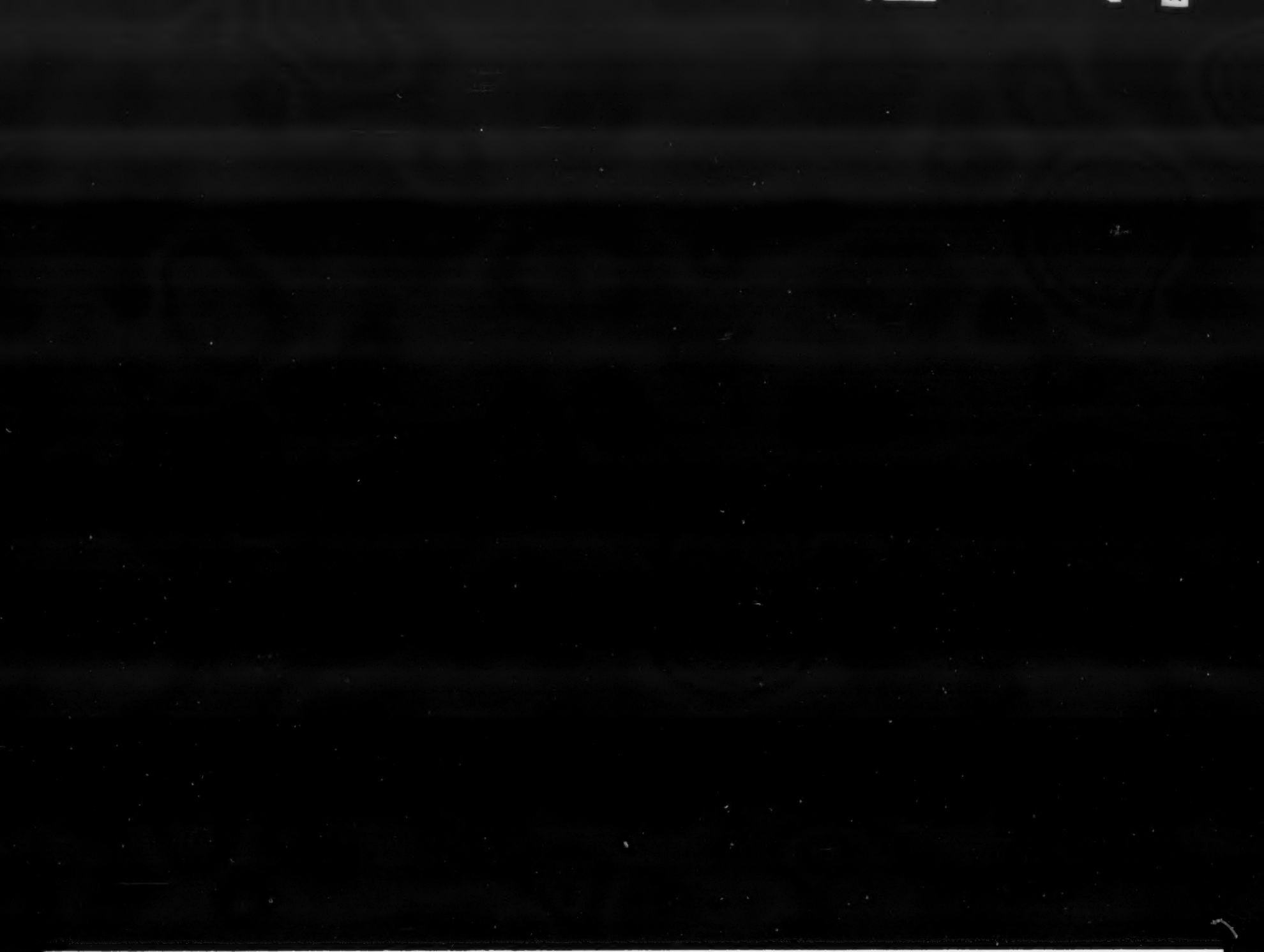
Does or does not civil defense itself play a part as a deterrent to war? Why?

The United Nations Charter comes up for revision in 1955: what opportunities might that offer which would aim at the abolition of war?

What other plans and steps might be encouraged as a way to bring about greater understanding among nations and peoples? Let's draw up a list and discuss each item.

©*Seventy areas in the nation have been named as critical targets. Do we live in one of them?*



For information relating to Civil Defense, write to the United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C., for their most recent list of publications on the subject. For an analysis of "Project East River," a government-sponsored study of America's vulnerability to atomic attack and the steps needed to reduce this threat, see the September, 1953, issue of the ***Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.*** *These may be purchased for $1.00 from the University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois.*

Coming: Guides on Pending Legislation.